

Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd
Board Meeting 29 September 2005
Minutes

Present: Niel Black, D. Dinning, Tony O'Shea and David Griffiths (Secretary) The Principal and Chief Executive Officer of the Co-operative College, Mr. Mervyn Wilson, attended part of the meeting.

Apology: G.Charles – a leave of absence.

Minutes of last meeting

That the minutes of the last board meeting of 18 August 2005 be approved as a true and accurate record and be signed by the Chair.

M: N. Black S: D.Dinning CARRIED

Audit

It was noted the Audit had been received and distributed to each Director by the Chairman.

The Chairman said that he would forward to the Secretary the copies for distribution to members.

It was resolved that the Financial Statements of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd for the year ended 30 June 2005 as previously distributed to Directors be adopted.

Annual General Meeting

It was agreed that the preferred time, date and location for the AGM was 12.00 Midday, 10 November 2005 at the Urban Camp with alternative dates of 17 and 24 November 2005.

Chestnut Growers

The Secretary reported on his attendance at a Strategy Workshop of the Chestnut Growers Association Ltd on 25 September 2005.

Accounts for Payment

That the following accounts for payment be approved:

\$100.50 Telstra

\$68.70 David Griffiths – various travel with \$54.30 chargeable to CAV grant

\$118.70 David Griffiths – travel to Chestnut growers strategy workshop

\$ 84.40 David Griffiths – costs associated with Mervyn Wilson, travel & \$35 book

\$73.82 Sensible Sandwich – board lunch

\$ 1102.85 David Dinning – costs associated with Mervyn Wilson

M: David Dinning S: N. Black CARRIED

Annual Subscriptions

The Secretary reported that 9 co-operatives had paid \$2500 in annual subscriptions:

\$250 Amalgamated Taxis Wodonga Co-operative Limited

\$250 Avoca District Cooperative Ltd

\$250 Carlton Rental Housing Co-operative

\$250 Para Park Co-operative Game Reserve Ltd

\$500 Cobden AB Co-operative

\$350 Macalister Research Farm

\$350 Urban Camp

\$150 Ruach Community Co-operative Ltd

\$150 Keysborough Freedom Club Cooperative Ltd

Rice Growers Co-operative

The Secretary reported that on 27 September he had sent the following email to Helen McCall, of the CFNSW:

Helen

Just a brief note.

Ricegrowers: Are they a CFNSW member? Does CFNSW have any role in their proposed demutualisation? Is there any co-operative concern about the proposed demutualisation or is it viewed as an internal matter for the co-op?

He reported that Helen McCall had responded on 28 September 2005:

I haven't followed it up since the day after the media briefing, hadn't had time, but it looks more like a change to a co-op company than a demutualisation. I've got to talk with management when I get a chance. Yes, they're members.

Helen

Our Community

The Secretary reported that following the meeting he had visited the Our Community web site and that the information regarding co-operatives was disappointing. He reported that on the 28 September 2005 he had sent the following email:

Your web site is an excellent resource **but**

I was surprised to read the following comment in your notes on Incorporation in Victoria:

"Co-operative societies are suitable only for some purposes, and most community groups don't fit the profile."

The Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd would strongly protest an assertion that co-operatives are only suitable for some purposes and we are astonished by the observation. The reality of the worldwide co-operative movement proves otherwise. We also don't understand what is meant by the comment "most community groups don't fit the profile" and would appreciate a clarification.

The comments are misleading and not helpful in assisting community groups to consider the co-operative option.

The Incorporation in Victoria sheet needs to be revised and CFV would be pleased with the opportunity to assist this revision and, if necessary, the other Incorporation sheets for the other States.

Mervyn Wilson Visit

The board welcomed the Principal and Chief Executive Officer of the Co-operative College, Mr. Mervyn Wilson, to the meeting.

A copy of final itinerary is attached.

Mr. Wilson said he would provide CFV with a written report but said he believed that he would be able to recommend the elements of an overall complex strategy that would have to be disaggregated.

He suggested short-term strategies could include the preparation of case studies, study tours and work the Co-operative College could undertake with Murray Goulburn and Capricorn.

He suggested other areas CFV could get involved with could be the development of a co-operative code of practice in Australia, board skill audits, measuring the effectiveness of co-operatives and promoting co-operative publications.

He said that co-operatives in Australia seemed to experience a crisis of confidence and this was not helped by their isolation from the international co-operative movement.

Report to CAV

The Draft Report was tabled. It was agreed that the Chairman and the Secretary would finalise the report. It was agreed that supporting documentation should not be incorporated within the report but attached as appendix material. The two main sections of the report are attached.

The Secretary suggested the report would be forwarded to CAV within two weeks.

Encyclopedia of Melbourne

The Secretary reported that the recently published **Encyclopedia of Melbourne** (2005) had references to mutuals. He noted that under Co-operative Movement there was no mention of dairy and farmer co-operatives, He also mentioned that the co-operatives mentioned were a selective and distorted representation e.g. Sybylla Press and L'osteria but that major co-operatives such as Murray Goulburn, Bonlac, CBH, Capricorn and Dairy Farmers were not mentioned.

Next Board Meeting: 10:00am, 10 November 2005.

Prepared by Secretary: 29 September 2005

Approved by Chairman:

Emailed to directors:

Subsequent to the CFV board meeting, the following response was received from Our Community:

Dear Mr. Griffiths,

Thank you for your email.

Our Community certainly had no intention of commenting unfavourably on the co-operative movement, for which we have the greatest respect.

Our general recommendation of incorporation for community groups rather than establishment as a co-operative is, rather, based on our knowledge of the community groups that access our pages and our publications – groups that are in the main small, low-budget, lacking major assets, not involved in commercial operations, and, most importantly, so unpracticed at legal forms that simplicity is almost the primary requirement of their acquisition of legal personhood. In this context, the fact that the Associations Incorporation Act runs to 134 pages and the Co-operatives Act runs to 418 (with all the responsibilities that implies) is, I am afraid, a major disadvantage for the former.

That said, I am sure that our formulation of the issues involved could be improved, and I welcome your offer to assist in its revision. Could I ask you for a draft of how your association would go about setting out the differing advantages and disadvantages of each mode?

Denis Moriarty

Final Itinerary for the visit of the Principal and Chief Executive Officer of the Co-operative College, UK, Mr. Mervyn Wilson.

Sunday 25 September 2005

Arrival Tullamarine Qantas QF802 ex Perth 4.45pm

Monday 26 September 2005

12:00 pm meeting and lunch with David Dinning, Tony O'Shea and David Griffiths, RACV Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne

2.00 pm meeting with David Cousins, Director, CAV, and Robert Larocca, Acting Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Level 23, 80 Collins Street, Nauru House, Melbourne

Tuesday 27 September 2005

10:00 Meeting Danny O'Donoghue, EO of The Centre at RACV Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne

12:30pm Meeting with Murray Goulburn board lunch, 140 Dawson Street, Brunswick

3.20pm Meeting with *Jennifer Grigg, Manager, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE-Mallee Campus at RACV Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne*

7:00 p.m. Dinner with Dr. Lawrie Dooley, Agribusiness Programs Director, Monash University, Tony O'Shea, Niel Black at O'Connells Centenary Hotel Restaurant, South Melbourne.

Wednesday 28 September 2005

10: 00 a.m. Meeting with Meredith Budge, Adviser, Victorian Communities, John Thwaites Office, and Jeff Rich, 1 Treasury Place

11:00 a.m. Meeting with Deborah Kennedy, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for Manufacturing and Export, Financial Services and Small Business and David Latina, Executive Director, Office of Small Business, 14/55 Collins Street (ANZ Building)

Thursday 29 September 2005

10:00 a.m. Interview with Chris Greenwood, Substitution Pty Ltd, 1/484 William Street, North Melbourne

11:00am Meeting with CFV board at Substitution Pty Ltd

3:30 p.m. Departure from Tullamarine Qantas to London

Summary and Overview of Funding Components

There were five key components.

1. Redesign australia.coop Deadline: 30 June 2005 Result: completed by 06 July 2005
2. Updating six popular publications Deadline: 31 July 2005 Result: Completed by 31 July 2005
3. Develop 10 new co-operative case studies/profiles. Deadline: 31 July 2005 Result: 12 completed by 11 August 2005 – 9 by 28 July 2005.
4. Create capacity for online surveys. Deadline: 31 July 2005. Result: Completed by 31 July 2005 with first online survey launched.
5. Create Members Area on web site, Deadline: 31 July 2005 Result: Created by 5 August 2005

Redesign The re-design of australia.coop has professionalised the site and increased accessibility to the site. Articles are created in searchable categories and sub-categories. Each article now has a print-friendly and email options. Each article and the main sections of the web site have links to the home page and the site search engine.

Popular articles update. Six articles were updated and published by the proposed deadline in HTML and PDF formats.

Case studies/profiles. It was proposed that 10 case studies be developed. Twelve case studies/profiles were developed and published – 9 by 28 July 2005 and the remaining three by 11 August 2005. The additional case studies/profiles have increased the number of case studies/profiles to a total of 28 and significantly broadened the range³ of business activities, the geographical location and the size of the co-operatives.

Online survey capacity. An online survey capacity has been developed with a survey launched on 31 July 2005 and responses received. The number of responses were disappointing but all 19 respondents were Australia and positive about australia.coop.

Members Area. Two Members Areas were created – Financial Members and Education Members.

Outcomes: The early indicators are that the redesign has already substantially achieved the statistical outcomes projected over a 12 month period as a result of the redesign. For July and August 2005 the hits, page views and MB transferred has exceeded these 12 month expectations and visits are close to the 12 month projection.

Outcomes

The CFV proposed and included in the Funding Agreement the following was proposed:

Statistic Type	Jan-Dec 2004 Actual	Jan- Dec Actual and Predicted without redesign	Impact of redesign
Visits	71,165	108,000	+ 25-50%
Hits	211,058	240,000	+ 25-50%
Page Views	109,166	120,000	+ 25-50%
MB transferred	16,966	20,000	+ 25-50%

Since the redesign of australia.coop actual statistics are available for July and August 2005:

Statistic Type	July 2005	August 2005
Visits	9914	11,202
Hits	45,618	45,278
Page Views	24,274	23,838
MB transferred	2304	2416

These statistics can be compared with the actual and predicted monthly averages without redesign for 2004 and 2005:

Statistic Type	Monthly average 2004 Actual	Monthly average 2005 Actual & Predicted	Monthly average with Predicted Increase 25%	Monthly average with Predicted Increase 50%	July 2005 Actual	August 2005 Actual
Visits	5930	9000	11,250	13,500	9914	11,202
Hits	17,588	20,000	25,000	30,000	45,618	45,278
Page Views	9097	10,000	12,500	15,000	24,274	23,838
MB transferred	1413	1666	2082	2498	2304	2416

The indicators are, therefore, that the redesign of australia.coop has already met expectations envisaged as achievable over a 12 month period. Only the 12 month period itself, however, will provide the necessary substantiation for these indicators.